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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution
contained in document A/33/L.3

Eighth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution (A/33/L.3) on the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (A/C.5/33/31 and Corr.1).
2. The Secretary-General estimates the financial implications of the draft resolution at \$3,669,700 as follows:

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(a) Conference servicing costs of the eighth session of the Conference to be convened at Geneva for six weeks in March and April 1979	2,191,900
(b) Maintenance of the secretariat of the Conference for 1979	1,184,400
(c) Other requirements during the eighth session for the Conference secretariat and OPI	293,400
	<hr/> 3,669,700 <hr/>

3. The Committee notes that the timing and venue of the eighth session of the Conference as proposed are reflected in the revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1979 (as at October 1978), which the Committee on Conferences is recommending to the General Assembly for adoption at its thirty-third session. 1/

4. In paragraph 2 of his statement (A/C.5/33/31 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General outlines the assumptions on which the conference servicing costs are based and, under items I, II, III and IV of paragraph 3, he provides a breakdown of these costs. In this connexion, the Committee was informed that the estimates were calculated on the basis of standard costs. They constitute the full conference-servicing costs, that is, without making any allowance for services to be provided from within resources already appropriated under section 23 in the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979. In paragraph 9, the Secretary-General indicates that later in the current session of the General Assembly he will report, in the consolidated paper on total conference servicing requirements, the extent to which the conference servicing costs can be absorbed within existing resources.

5. The Advisory Committee notes the statement in paragraph 4 that the estimates of conference servicing costs are based on a smaller volume of in-session documentation and fewer meetings requiring summary records than the estimates for the seventh session (A/C.5/32/109). None the less, the Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will continue carefully to scrutinize requirements so as to ensure that recruitment of short-term conference-servicing staff is confined to those actually needed for the eighth session of the Conference.

6. The Secretary-General's request for additional appropriations is thus confined, at this stage, to \$1,477,800 under section 2B, consisting of \$1,184,400 to maintain the secretariat of the Conference for 1979 and \$293,400 to meet other requirements during the eighth session for the Conference secretariat and the Office of Public Information.

7. The Advisory Committee recalls that the appropriations for the biennium 1978-1979 as approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session in resolution 32/213 A include an amount of \$1,214,800 under section 2B for the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, representing the cost of maintaining the secretariat of the Conference in 1978 to ensure stability and continuity for the personnel recruited for the Conference, pursuant to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 31/63 of 10 December 1976. 2/ The appropriations as approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session did not include any provision for activities in 1979, as the latter depended on decisions to be taken by the Assembly at its thirty-third session. The estimate of \$1,184,400 for 1979 is based on a staffing table of 30 posts (18 Professional and above and

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 32 (A/33/32).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/32/8 and Corr.1), chap. II, part II, para. 2.9.

12 General Service). In paragraph 8 (a) of his report, the Secretary-General proposes that one P-4 post in the administrative unit be reclassified to the P-5 level and redeployed for substantive functions. In all other respects the staffing table proposed for 1979 is the same as the one for 1978. Bearing in mind that in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution the General Assembly reiterates its authorization to the Secretary-General "... to take appropriate measures to ensure stability and continuity for the secretariat personnel recruited for the Conference", the Advisory Committee recommends that the request for \$1,184,400 for the maintenance of the secretariat of the Conference be approved.

8. Under item V of paragraph 3 of his statement (A/C.5/33/31 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General provides a breakdown of the \$293,400 requested to cover the requirements during the eighth session for the Conference secretariat (\$269,200) and the Office of Public Information (\$24,200). The estimates relate for the most part to travel and subsistence costs and the recruitment of short-term staff. The Secretary-General links these requirements to increased workload attributable to the establishment of several negotiating and language groups during the seventh session. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the Secretary-General's request.

9. The Committee notes that, under the terms of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the Conference would be empowered by the General Assembly, if the progress of its work at the eighth session so warranted, to decide then to hold further meetings under arrangements to be determined in consultation with the Secretary-General. The Committee understands that any related additional costs will be dealt with under the provisions of Assembly resolution 32/214 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1978-1979.

10. Subject to the observation in paragraphs 4, 5 and 9 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/33/L.3, there would be need for additional appropriations of \$1,477,800 under section 2B and \$283,300 under section 25, the latter amount to be offset by an increase in the same amount in the estimates of income from staff assessment under income section 1; and that additional requirements not exceeding \$2,191,900 for conference servicing costs would arise under section 23.

11. In paragraph 10 of his report (A/C.5/33/31 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General refers to one "other matter pertaining to the Conference", namely, the question of the payment of an honorarium and travel and subsistence expenses for the President of the Conference in 1978 and indicates that, if the General Assembly should decide to maintain the existing arrangements through 1979, there would be need for an additional appropriation of \$55,900. The Advisory Committee's observations on this question are contained in paragraph 15 of its first report to the General Assembly on the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979 (A/33/7).